



**February 10, 2011 Public Hearing Testimony before the
Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on Human Services**

Raised Bill No. 6218:

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON SAFETY NET SERVICES

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Peter DeBiasi. I am the President/CEO of the Access Community Action Agency (Access), which helps low-income families in Windham and Tolland Counties work their way out of poverty. I also co-chair the State's Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services. I am here today representing my agency and the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA). CAFCA supports Connecticut's twelve (12) Community Action Agencies: our state's federal- and state-designated antipovertry partners, which serve each of Connecticut's towns and cities.

Thank you for holding this hearing on Raised Bill No. 6218: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON SAFETY NET SERVICES. This bill would lead to consensus-driven, results-based recommendations for budget, policy, and statutory changes so that Connecticut's families in need have more appropriate access to prompt and effective services that help them get back on their feet. Connecticut's social safety net should be of concern to all residents, businesses, and nonprofits in our state, no matter how well off they may be. The fact of the matter is that human suffering and needless fiscal costs affect everyone, and we all benefit by their prevention.

As the State of Connecticut seeks innovative ways to do more with less, it is imperative that we be guided by open, thoughtful discourse among the full range of stakeholders. In this spirit, CAFCA encourages the Committee to adopt substitute language providing for additional representation on the Task Force so that a broader group, including providers and participants, is at the table tackling this important issue. An example of such language is included with my written testimony today. -

Connecticut's Community Action Agencies are committed to empowering low-income families, whether they come to us from generational poverty or have just recently fallen on hard times. We are just as committed to continuing our strong partnership with the State. A closer look at how low-income residents experience and benefit from our state's social safety net makes sense socially and fiscally as we work together to build a better future for *all* Connecticut families.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to take your questions.

Addendum to CAFCA's 2/10/11 testimony on Raised Bill No. 6218:

**Sample language adding members of the public to the
Task Force on Safety Net Services**

After Sec. 1(b)(9):

- (10) Three persons appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that advocates for individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs and one of whom shall be a state employee providing services to individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs or a representative of such state employee;
- (11) Three persons appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a person who is a recipient of benefits in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs or representative of such person and one of whom shall be a representative of a private provider of services to individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs;
- (12) Two persons appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that advocates for individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs and one of whom shall be a state employee providing services to individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs or a representative of such state employee;
- (13) Two persons appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be a person who is a recipient of benefits in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs or representative of such person;
- (14) Two persons appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of a private provider of services to individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs;
- (15) Two persons appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that advocates for individuals participating in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs; and
- (16) Two persons appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be a person who is a recipient of benefits in the TFA, JFES, Medicaid, HUSKY, food, housing or child care assistance programs or representative of such person.